

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 08237 021128Z

14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 /070 W

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R 021047Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1991

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, TH

SUBJECT: LABOR DEVELOPMENTS

REF: BANGKOK 7870

1. ALTHOUGH A THREE MEMBER ARBITRATION PANEL DECIDED THAT THE HARA GARMENT COMPANY MUST RE-EMPLOY APPROXIMATELY 35 YOUNG WOMEN WHO OCCUPIED ONE OF THE FIRM'S PLANTS DURING A LENGTHY STRIKE, MANAGEMENT HAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE IMPRECISE RULING OF THE PANEL TO FORESTALL THE RETURN. THE PANEL, COMPOSED OF A MANAGEMENT ATTORNEY, A LABOUR UNION LEADER AND A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR, DECIDED, WITH MANAGEMENT'S REPRESENTATIVE DISSENTING, THAT THE WORKERS MUST BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO WORK ON APRIL 1. IN A MOVE REGARDED BY LABOR AS A DISPLAY OF MANAGEMENT'S BAD FAITH, MANAGEMENT SAID ALL RETURNING STRIKERS WOULD BE RE-EMPLOYED IN THE SAME STATUS AS NEW EMPLOYEES, RECEIVING THE MINIMUM WAGE AND SUBJECT TO A 180 DAY PROBATIONARY PERIOD DURING WHICH THE EMPLOYEES COULD BE DISMISSED WITHOUT BEING ENTITLED TO SEVERANCE PAY BENEFITS. A RTG LABOR DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT THE ARBITRATION RULING WAS NOT BINDING IN ANY CASE AND THE INCIDENT ONLY SERVED TO POINT OUT THE LACK OF EXPERIENCE AND SOPHISTICATION AMONG THAI LABOR LEADERSHIP.

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 08237 021128Z

COMMENT: MANAGEMENT HAS NO DESIRE TO RE-EMPLOY THE STRIKERS. THE POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION THE GIRLS RECEIVED DURING THE STRIKE IS VIEWED AS A DISEASE BEST TREATED BY AMPUTATION. HOWEVER, MANAGEMENT'S ACTION WILL RE-INFORCE LABOR'S VIEW THAT MANAGEMENT IS UNTRUSTWORTHY AND ARBITRATION UNREWARDING.

2. AFTER A HEATED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, THE CONFEDERATION OF LABOR UNIONS OF THAILAND (CLUT) DECIDED TO SEND A SIX MAN DELEGATION TO MEET WITH THE PRIME MINISTER APRIL 2 TO URGE THE RELEASE OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE A SPEEDY RESOLUTION OF THE CASE OF FOUR STUDENTS AND FIVE TEXTILE WORKERS ARRESTED FOR POSSESSING FIREARMS AND VIOLATING THE ANTI-COMMUNIST LAWS. ALTHOUGH SOME COMMITTEE MEMBERS SAID THE STUDENTS WERE NOT HELPING LABOR AND CONDEMNED THE LABOR COORDINATION CENTER, THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEE WAS OF THE OPINION THAT THE EVIDENCE WAS INSUFFICIENT, THE INCIDENT CONTRIVED TO DISRUPT THE ELECTIONS, AND THE ARRESTS DESIGNED TO WEAKEN ORGANIZED LABOR. ALL IN ALL, LABOR AND STUDENT REACTION TO THE ARRESTS HAS BEEN RESTRAINED. NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) LEADERS SAY THEY WILL WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE APRIL 4 ELECTIONS BEFORE CALLING DEMONSTRATIONS.  
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